

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

November 2023 Newsletter



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Christmas represents an in-breaking of the Kingdom of God into the world.

I say it “re-presents” rather than “remembers” because what Christmas means—what God did at Christmas—was not a one-and-done event. Rather Christmas started a new thing, where God took on flesh and dwelt among His people as promised. In Jesus we see Emmanuel: “God who is with us.” But when we celebrate Christmas, it is as a people who know the whole story of Jesus. That God chose to become one of us, and in a wonderful mystery remains with us “even to the end of the age.” And while now we recognize Him among us through faith, we confess that He will come again as victorious Lord of all.

So, at Christmas we consider the Lord’s three-fold coming (the word “Advent,” our season of preparation for Christmas, means “arrival” in Latin). He came to us in Bethlehem; He comes to us

today, in the Word and Sacraments and in the “least of these” our brothers and sisters; And he will come again at the end of the world to make all things new.

These three things are related. And recognizing how they’re related is something that helps us live our lives abundantly. Each of these arrivals of Jesus into the world is something unexpected. Despite all the prophecies and forewarning, the Bible tells us that Jesus “came to his own, but his own did not recognize him.” This doesn’t just refer to the wise men who expected to find the King born in a palace instead of a stable, but it refers to the whole human race. The world was not expecting this kind of Savior. Instead, we expected (and often still want) one made in our own image. Likewise, Jesus tells his disciples something unexpected where to find him after his ascension. He tells us to receive him in the Word and in the Sacraments, and to serve him by serving the needy and our neighbor.

We spend so much time trying to worship God in our own way, according to our preferences, but God sends us flesh and blood humans and says that he will meet us in those encounters—often encounters that make us uncomfortable and force us to grow. And lastly Jesus says that his return at the end of time will be unexpected “like a thief in the night.” He tells us that no one knows the hour of his return. This is said not to scare us or make us wonder, but to encourage us to live the kind of lives that don’t need to scramble to prepare. We are to be always ready for our judgment and our end, whether our end comes unexpectedly or the whole world ends unexpectedly. We should always have confidence in God’s goodness and a clean conscience. “Ready to go.”

We don’t merely commemorate something that happened a long time ago, as if Jesus came once and has left us on our own. No! He is with us always, even to the end of time, he promises. And this is important because if we believe that Jesus IS with us, even now, then we should be living different lives. We don’t act as if Jesus was once with us and isn’t now. Instead, we believe that we are filled with his life and should strive to live like him. Loving all people, serving one another, glorifying God the Father with our every action.

We don’t act as if Jesus has left us puzzling how to serve him. Instead, we recognize that he has given us to each other and told us to love our neighbor and our enemy and the stranger as if they were the Lord himself. This is hard at times but in loving all people, we not only fulfill the Lord’s command, but learn something about ourselves. After all, as Dorothy Day put it paraphrasing the Apostle John, “I only really love God as much as I love the person whom I love the least.”

And lastly, we don’t act as if Jesus has promised us a Kingdom that is somewhere far away and in a distant future. Instead, we recognize that Jesus is already King, and that his Kingdom has already begun. That all the things described above are part of living in God’s Kingdom and as citizens of God’s Kingdom already now. Someday, when Jesus returns, everyone will experience this way of living. But already now, we are supposed to be living as citizens of the Kingdom of God. That means that we don’t put our trust in earthly rulers to establish God’s Kingdom on earth. We don’t elect politicians to enforce what we think is God’s will through coercion. But we live in a Kingdom of the heart, where we love our enemies until they become our siblings and where we care less for our rights and exercising our privileges and more about using what we have to imitate Jesus and persuade people of his goodness with lives of humility and holiness.

God is in our midst. He is now and will be forever. Let us encourage one another to live lives convinced that Jesus is strengthening us, Jesus is challenging us, Jesus is showing us what truly matters, and that Jesus is with us in our joys and in our sorrows, making all things new.

Peace and Joy,

Pastor Tom

Pastoral Care

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1334
Office Phone-860-684-7571
Church – htlc-church@att.net
Website – htlcstafford.org
Pastor Tom (860-806-2440)
Email t.s.drobena@gmail.com
Rev. Dr. Thomas Drobena

Members of the Council are:

Rev. Thomas S. Drobena
President – Walter Kovaciny
Vice-President – Michael Marvonek
Treasurer – Sheila Welch
Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe
Leonard Lichanec
Patricia Marvonek
Laurel Rose

(Non-Council position)

Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

Service Teams

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa
† Hospitality Committee: Amelia Hinchliffe and Jennifer Welch
† Property Team: Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and Michael Welch
† Learning & Youth Group Team:
Rev. Thomas Drobena, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

Shut-in Members of Holy Trinity

Attn: Barbara Bulick
The Ivy at Ellington
123 West Road Apt 115
Ellington. CT 06029-5730

Ms. Anna Mandak
21 Old Monson Rd.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343
Attn: Vera Marko Room #219
The Buckland Court
432 Buckland Rd.
South Windsor, CT 06074

Mr. George Pallanck
8 Park St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076
Mrs. Olga Panciera
10 Franklin Woods Dr.
Somers, CT 06071
Mrs. Pauline Valery
24 Holburn Ave.
Cranston, RI 02910

Electronic Giving

For those who are not able to attend in person regularly, we have an online giving page that can be used for recurring giving or for one-time Donations. The cost of the service is 2.75% for using a credit card and only 1% for direct debit. You will have the option to add the fee to your donation.

We would much prefer to see you in person.

We have social hour after church on the 1st and 3rd Sundays. Join us for fellowship.

To donate copy this link <https://secure.myvanco.com/YJ24> The website is very easy to navigate.

January Birthdays

13 – Vera Marko
13 – Olga M. Panciera
15 – Eric Mercier
15 – Paul Mercier

- 21 – Bob Titus
- 22 – Leonard Lichanec
- 26 – Michael Marvonek

Anniversaries

We're not aware of anyone celebrating an anniversary this month. If this is in error, please let Pastor Tom and Walter Kovaciny know.

Activities on Saturday, December 2nd

8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saint Edward Ladies Guild Christmas Bazaar

2:00 p.m. Emery Austin Smith and Friends Stafford Baptist Church Flyers for both events are posted in the narthex and social hall.

Shirley A. Kaba, a friend of the Congregation passed away on Wednesday, November 22, 2023. In her later years, Shirley A. Kaba had been a resident of Douglas Manor. When Shirley Kaba was still at home, the group of carolers from church would include Shirley in one of the stops and sing carols to her.

Council Members needed

Perhaps you've thought of becoming a member of the church council. The minimum duties are serve as a teller counting the income from the weekly envelopes and attending the monthly council meeting which presently meets on the 2nd Sunday after church. If you're interesting on volunteering as a council member or have any questions, please talk to one of the present members of council.

Annual Reports

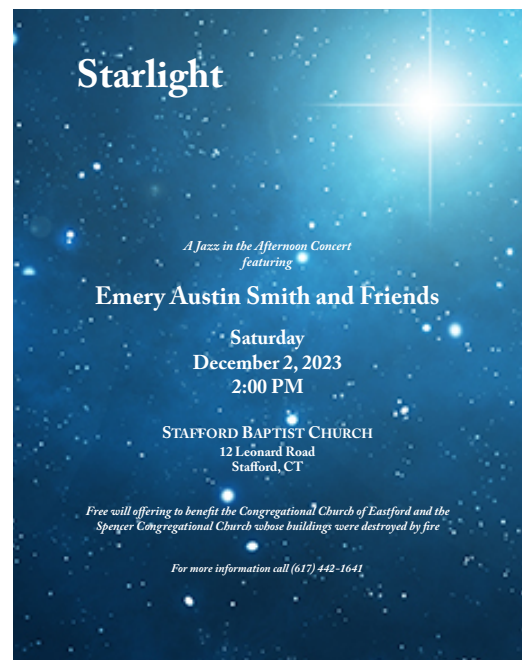
If you're serving on a committee of church, the suggested date to submit your written annual report is Saturday, January 13, 2024. Suggested written reports are: Financial Secretary; Hospitality Committee reporting on the Dinners we had during 2023, including the Harvest Sale and Christmas Bake sale. By submitting the written reports by Saturday, January 13, 2024 or earlier that should be enough time to collate the reports into the annual report in a timely manner. Please give your reports to Walter Kovaciny.

Annual Meeting

The tentative date for the meeting is the 4th Sunday of January 28, 2024.

Update

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December – January Service Schedule

These readings are from Series B and can be found in the front of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal.

<u>Teller</u>	<u>Worship Assistant</u>	<u>Reader</u>
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December 3, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – The First Sunday of Advent – Blue

Isaiah 64: 1 – 9; Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 17 – 19; 1 Corinthians 1: 3 – 9; Mark 13: 24 – 37

Amelia Hinchliffe

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Walter Kovaciny

Hymns – **Entrance:** 260 Gospel Acclamation: 257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verses, 1 & 2),

Hymn of the Day: 436, **Communion:** 715, **Closing:** 246

December 10, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – The Second Sunday of Advent – Blue

Isaiah 40: 1 – 11; Psalm 85: 6; 1 – 2, 8 – 13; 2 Peter 3: 8 – 15a; Mark 1: 1 – 8

Jennifer Welch

Sheila Welch

Daniel Lichanec

Michael Welch

Hymns: **Entrance:** 239, Gospel Acclamation #257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verses 3&4) **Hymn**

of the Day: 256 **Communion:** 244 **Closing:** 254

December 17, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – The Third Sunday of Advent – Blue

Isaiah 61: 1 – 4, 8 – 11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5: 16 – 24; John 1: 6 – 8, 19 – 28

Cathy Lichanec

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Leonard Lichanec

Hymns – **Entrance:** 311 Gospel Acclamation #257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verse 5&6) **Hymn**

of the Day: 264 **Communion:** 737 **Closing:** 244

December 24, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – The Fourth Sunday of Advent – Blue

2 Samuel 7: 1 – 11, 16; Psalm 89: 1 – 4, 19 – 26; Romans 16: 25 – 27; Luke 1: 26 – 38

Walter Kovaciny

Sheila Welch

Daniel Lichanec

Laurel Rose

Hymns: **Entrance:** 263 Gospel Acclamation #257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel (verses 7&8) **Hymn**

of the Day: 295 **Communion:** 205 **Closing:** 267

December 24, 2023 – 8:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve – White

Isaiah 9 : 2 – 7; Psalm 96; Titus 2: 11 – 14; Luke 2: 1 – 14 [15 – 20]

December 25, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day – White

Isaiah 52: 7 – 10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1: 1 – 4 [5 – 12] John 1: 1 – 14

December 31, 2023 – 10:00 a.m. – The First Sunday of Christmas – White

Isaiah 61: 10 to 62: 3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4: 4 – 7; Luke 2: 22 – 20

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Michael Marvonek

Hymns: **Entrance** 269 **Hymn of the Day** 275 **Offertory** 296 **Communion** 490 **Closing**
288

December *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 The First Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Social Hour & Tree Trimming	4 John of Damascus, <i>Theologian & Hymnwriter</i>	5 Pastor Tom's day off	6 Nicholas, <i>Bishop</i> 5:30 – 7 p.m. SafeNet Distribution	7 Ambrose, <i>Bishop & Hymnwriter</i>	8	9 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. SafeNet Distribution
10 The Second Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Council meeting.	11 <i>Deadline to order Poinsettias</i>	12 Pastor Tom's day off	13 Lucy, <i>Martyr</i>	14 John of the Cross, <i>Mystic</i>	15	16
17 The Third Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Christmas Party 4 p.m.	18	19 Pastor Tom's day off	20 Deadline for ordering Cookies and Kolach	21	22	23 Christmas Cookie Pick-Up 10-11:30 a.m. 8:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. SafeNet Distribution
24 The Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Christmas Eve 8:00 p.m. Holy Communion	25 Christmas Day Holy Communion 10:00 a.m.	26 Stephen, <i>Deacon & Martyr</i>	27 John, <i>Evangelist</i>	28 Holy Innocents of Bethlehem	29 5th Day of Christmas	30 6th Day of Christmas Christmas Caroling 1 p.m.
31 The First Sunday of Christmas 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion Last day for 2023 contributions	1 Circumcision of our Lord	2 9th Day of Christmas	3 10th Day of Christmas	4 11th Day of Christmas	5 12th Day of Christmas	6 Epiphany

Christmas Bake Sale

Cookies and Kolache

Saturday, December 23, 2023
10 am to 11:30 am

Order with attached form

All orders need to be placed by
Wednesday, December 20th

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
104 W Main St Stafford Springs
Green St Entrance



Name: _____

Phone: _____

Check One:

Check Enclosed Payment at Pick Up

Mail Orders to: HTLC
104 Main St
Stafford Springs CT 06076

Or Drop in Mail Slot at the Converse St Entrance

Cookie Platters

An Assortment of Cookies

Chocolate, Molasses, Oatmeal, Fudge, Lemon, Spritz, Pizzelles, Double Chocolate, Sugar, Gingersnap, Peanut Butter

Kolach

Sweet Raised Bread Roll filled with walnuts, cranberry-nut, poppy seed, or apricot

Orders must be received by Wed., Dec. 20

Pick Up is Saturday, December 23rd
10 am to 11:30 am

Item	Quantity	Price Each	Total Price
Sm Cookie (24)		\$10.00	
Med Cookie (36)		\$15.00	
Lg Cookie (60)		\$25.00	
Full Nut Kolach		\$15.00	
Half Nut Kolach		\$7.50	
Full Cran Nut Kolach		\$15.00	
Half Cran Nut Kolach		\$7.50	
Full Poppy Kolach		\$15.00	
Half Poppy Kolach		\$7.50	
Full Apricot Kolach		\$15.00	
Half Apricot Kolach		\$7.50	
		Grand Total	

Christmas Poinsettias

The members and friends of Holy Trinity are encouraged to donate poinsettias each Christmas in order to give Glory to God and beautify our sanctuary during the Nativity liturgies. Those who donate the poinsettias may take them after the 10:00 a.m. liturgy or Christmas Day, December 25th or the following Sundays. The cost of each poinsettia is \$10.00.

Your Name: _____

Given in honor of (for the living) _____

OR

Given in loving memory of (for the deceased) _____

Please return this form to Walter Kovaciny with the correct payment, by Sunday, December 11th. If paying by check, it should be payable to the: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. We are only getting Red Poinsettias this year. Thank you.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

104 West Main St.

Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Website address [www.holytrinitystafford.Slovak Zion Synod –](http://www.holytrinitystafford.SlovakZionSynod.org)

ELCA Address Correction Requested



org